

2023 -- H 6502

LC003046

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

H O U S E R E S O L U T I O N

COMMEMORATING "WORLD SICKLE CELL AWARENESS DAY" ON JUNE 19, 2023

Introduced By: Representatives Kislak, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Chippendale,
McNamara, Ackerman, Stewart, Alzate, Cruz, and Potter

Date Introduced: June 08, 2023

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, June 19th is officially designated and observed annually as World Sickle
2 Cell Awareness Day. This year, "Shine the Light" is the national awareness campaign to increase
3 public knowledge and an understanding of Sickle Cell Disease (SCD), and the challenges
4 experienced by patients, their families and caregivers; and

5 WHEREAS, Sickle Cell Disease is an inherited blood disorder that causes a person's red
6 blood cells to become misshapen with the appearance of a sickle or crescent moon; and

7 WHEREAS, Sickle Cell Disease is among the most common inherited blood conditions
8 in the United States and across the world affecting millions of people, primarily those of African
9 descent; and

10 WHEREAS, Annually in the United States, approximately 3,000 babies are born with
11 SCD and an estimated 100,000 Americans are currently living with the disease; and

12 WHEREAS, Health equity refers to the fair and equal distribution of health and
13 healthcare resources, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or other social
14 determinants of health. In Rhode Island, there are still disparities in the management of SCD that
15 contribute to health inequities for many people in the State; and

16 WHEREAS, Barriers to care include implicit bias, racism, inadequate insurance
17 coverage, lack of transportation, and limited access to specialists and comprehensive care, and
18 often leads to health-related stigma, frequent hospitalizations, higher rates of complications and
19 early mortality, and decreased quality of life for persons with SCD; and

20 WHEREAS, Currently in Rhode Island, approximately 300 individuals are being treated

1 for Sickle Cell Disease with active efforts to improve their care but with continued challenges due
2 to underlying social determinants of health and significant challenges in accessing care that
3 contribute to disparities in the outcomes and quality of life for many persons with SCD; and

4 WHEREAS, People suffering from the disease often experience serious pain, chronic
5 anemia, infection, and other acute and chronic complications requiring blood transfusions but
6 there remains a shortage of blood donations in the State and nationally, particularly among
7 appropriately matched donors that are most suitable for individuals with sickle cell disease; and

8 WHEREAS, There is not yet a universal cure for this life-threatening disease, there are
9 effective treatments, included with a multi-disciplinary comprehensive and patient-centered
10 model that include both medical and psychosocial care, ensuring expanded availability of
11 resources and coverage, financial assistance, additional support for education and job training,
12 and prioritizing and investing in programs and initiatives specifically focused on improving the
13 quality of SCD care across the State and across the lifespan from infancy through adulthood,
14 Rhode Island can improve access and care for all individuals living with SCD; now, therefore be
15 it

16 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
17 commemorates June 19, 2023 as “World Sickle Cell Awareness Day” and urges healthcare
18 providers, public health organizations, and community groups to “Shine a Light” and raise
19 awareness for the available resources and support and fund the initiatives still desperately
20 required to help care for all people living with SCD; and

21 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
22 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Rhode Island Blood Center and the Sickle
23 Cell Disease Association of America, Inc.

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